

MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF THE CHURCH OF ^{Antierion} England.

Diocese of Athabasca.

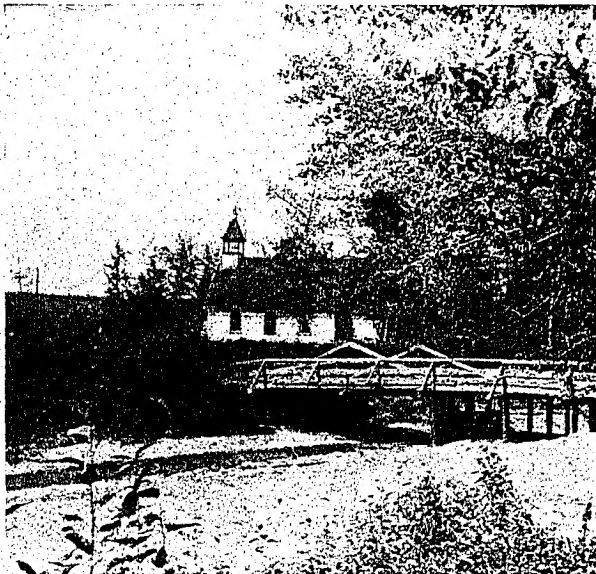
Popular information series, no. 21.

Toronto, M.S. of the C.ofE., 1936.

LIBERTY

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Athabasca



St. James' Church, Peace River, Diocese of Athabasca. There is no cathedral or pro-cathedral in this Diocese. The See house is in this town and the Bishop uses this little log church, past which the Peace River flows. The river is a mile wide at this place.

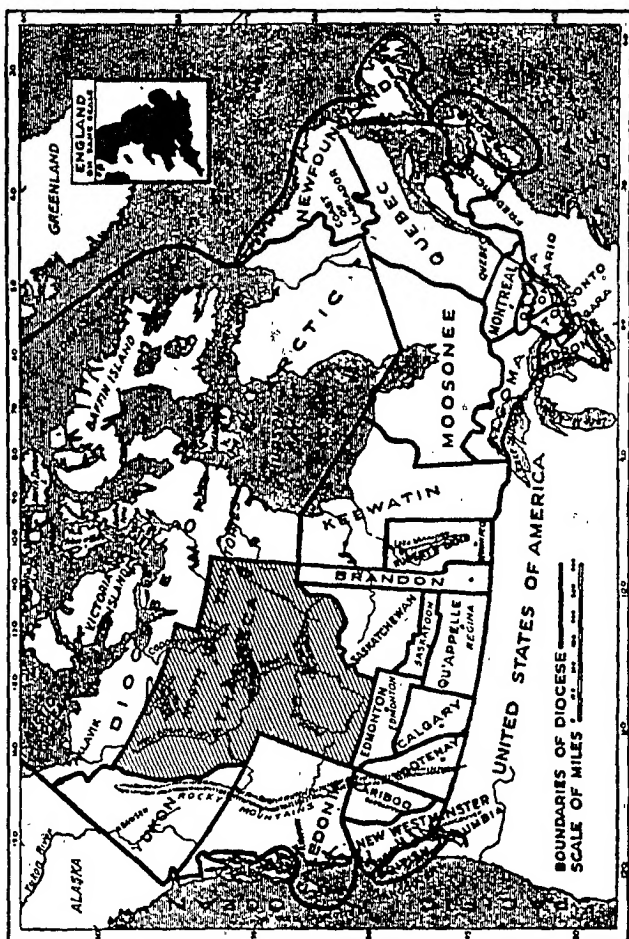
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

No. 21

Popular Information Series
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This map shows the geographical position and the extent of the Diocese of Athabasca.

THIS DIOCESE covers one-sixth of the area of Canada—600,000 square miles—and comprises the Valleys of the Athabasca, Peace and Mackenzie Rivers.

Draw a line from East to West, across the Province of Alberta about 75 miles North of the City of Edmonton, move the line to the Northern boundary of Alberta; then go down the vast valley of the Mackenzie River to the Arctic Circle and you will have outlined the Diocese.

Bishop

The Right Rev. Arthur Henry Sovereign,
M.A., D.D., F.R.G.S.

For God and His Church in Athabasca

By the Bishop of the Diocese

The map on page 2 shows the relation of this Diocese to other parts of Canada. To illustrate what the extent of its territory entails in the matter of travel, when the Bishop visits the New Missionary Centre at Great Bear Lake, he must journey 2,000 miles from his home at the See House, Peace River. Other Missionary journeys and those of our clergy, of lesser distances, but more frequently undertaken, could also be quoted, and at times, in an atmosphere of 40 degrees below zero.

Until recent years the Peace and Athabasca Rivers were the main central arteries of communication, but three Railways now connect the different areas of this Diocese with Edmonton, the great centre for all points in N. Alberta. This facilitates travel, and has led to the extensive opening up of the country by a **White population** widely spread in agricultural development, fisheries, lumber camps and oil drilling.

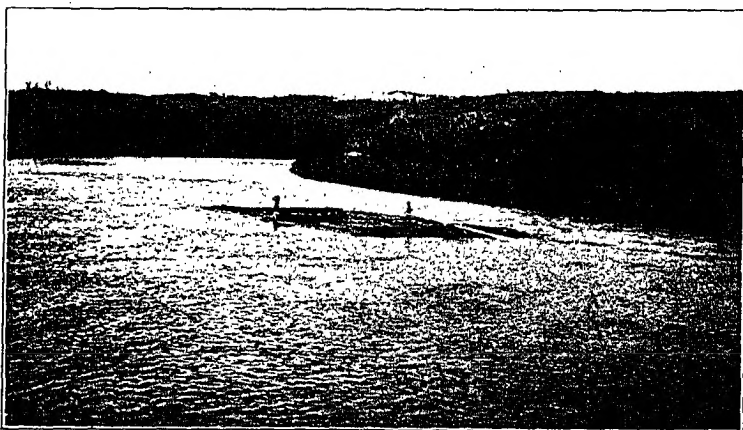
Yesterday and To-day

Great names are woven into the History of the Diocese of Athabasca. Their memorials lie along the shores of its great lakes and rivers, and remain with us in the characteristics of courage and adventure among our people, and in the splendid vision set before them. This is so, not in one way of life alone, for the men who have made this history and have left the vision with us, have not belonged to one class!

The early Explorer, the Missionary, the Pioneer Settler—each in turn have made their unsurpassed contribution, and have left us who follow them, with an amazing and expanding opportunity before us.

Let us mention one of each of these types—**Alexander Mackenzie**, who with indomitable faith and courage

passed over our vast and uncharted rivers and mountains till he faced the waters of the Pacific; **William Carpenter Bompas** ignoring unsurpassed hardship and isolation, consecrated at Lambeth in 1874 first Bishop of Athabasca, then newly set apart from the vast Diocese of Rupert's Land, shepherded its scattered people until 1884, when he went further North and other devoted men worthily followed the trail he had made here; later came the undaunted Pioneer Settlers and among them **Herman Trelle** to the Peace River District, a rich, agricultural territory of 50,000,000 acres in the southern portion of this vast Diocese. For four successive years "Trelle of Wembly, Peace River" won the "Wheat Crown" and in the 3 "crop years" of 1926-27-28 won 186 awards, 43 being championships, 14 international and 7 of these world championships; demonstrating the extraordinary fertility of the rich soil of this country, with its timely and adequate supply of moisture and warm, bright sunshine for 20 hours and more during the growing period, and bringing from it the development of quickly maturing and frost-resisting strains of grain, now become famous. It may here be said that plums, apples, berries and other fruits are also grown successfully, besides potatoes, sweet corn, lettuce, beets, cabbages and other vegetables.



A raft bringing out lumber on the Athabasca River.

The Peace River District

This rich and widespread area, with its population, chiefly on scattered farms and in small settlements, has hitherto been with our Indian Missions, the chief and very considerable concern of the Diocese. Missions have been opened to form centres for many new stations and these have increased with the rapid extension of continuous settlement.

All this development offered one of the greatest opportunities of the age for Missionary service, and this the Church here has been striving to meet, chiefly depending for its financial support upon the contributions from our Church in Canada through M. S. C. C. grants.

Progress towards self-support is encouraging, but the district still requires the continued support of the Church outside, and will do so for some time. Grande Prairie and Peace River are becoming industrial and commercial centres.

In the greater Peace River district, the census of 1911 showed a population of less than 2,000 souls, including settlers, traders, missionaries and Indians. That of 1921 gave 20,000. This remarkable increase of 1,000 per cent. in a single decade is due to a rush of land seekers who invaded the district during this period. The first eight years of the following decade saw this number trebled, reliable estimates placing the population of the Peace River country in the beginning of 1930 at 60,000 and today at 75,000. It is an "Empire in the making."

These settlers contributed in a satisfactory manner and continue to do so according to their ability towards the upkeep of the ministrations of the Church thus provided. Notwithstanding certain times of loss

CANADA'S LAST GREAT WEST.

A Land of Invitation.

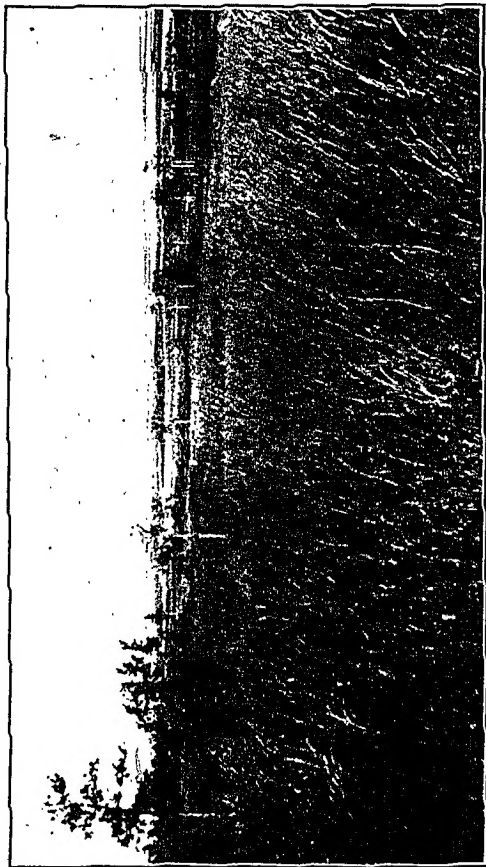
This country is the last great area of good agricultural land on the North American Continent available for settlement. In it we have reached the frontier limits of possible wheat production.

Successive waves of migration are now occupying or are offered in it, all the new territory for this purpose that Canada has to give.

What does this mean to our Church in Canada?

It means the immediate answer to the vital question—What is to be the future character of the citizens of this wide new land?

The opportunity to decide what shall be the answer, will never occur again. It is ours to-day.



From a hill nearby can be seen this stretch of country—a million acres of arable land—in the great Peace River area.



The visit of a missionary is eagerly welcomed by a
lonely pioneer.

in harvest through frost, they are now giving more than ever before. One parish, where \$100 was given to apportionment one year, and \$300 the next, is this year pledged to raise \$600 and is doing it. All but two parishes are using the envelope system, they are courageously doing their part, and the work of the church among them is healthy and promising.



Easter congregation at a little church in South Athabasca.



Polish and Ukrainian children who come 4 and 5 miles over bad trails to school at Narrow Lake. Each family takes the Sunday School by Post papers and too poor even to mail their answers, are helped in this work at a special class held for that purpose by their school teacher, seen in centre at back.



The moisture of the land is one of the notable resources of Athabasca, but sometimes a wet season means "too much of a good thing" on a new road and makes trouble for everyone. One of our difficulties is to provide cars and their upkeep for our clergy, who cover long distances in all kinds of weather.

Indian Missions

In this Diocese these Missions are among the Beaver, Cree, Chipewyan and Slavi Tribes, widely scattered over the whole of its great area, and they still remain very much as established by the Church Missionary Society many years ago.

They are therefore still gathered about three chief centres, St. Peter's Mission Lesser Slave Lake, St. Andrew's Mission White Fish Lake and St. John's Mission Wabasca in a great Northern country inhabited by hunters, among whom active missionary work is maintained. To this are now added the Missions of the Deanery of Mackenzie River. Extension in Indian work is sadly needed and there is constant pressure in the consciousness that this is not being done.

A stronger policy must be established for this work and plans be made for the bringing of children into our Indian Residential Schools at Wabasca, White Fish Lake and Hay River, with an active follow-up policy and regard for the way of living of these young people after they leave school.



After a confirmation service at St. John's Indian Residential School at Wabasca. Bishop Sovereign in centre at the back and Rev. K. L. Sandercock, principal of the school, at the right.

The Indian work of our Church in this Diocese is in a very weak condition. Outside of the Missionary-in-charge at each of our 3 Indian Schools, there is not a single priest giving his full time to the work. The Indian Lay Readers are doing a good work in conducting services and helping the Missionary, but cannot give the instruction necessary for the development of spiritual self-reliance. In a neighbouring Diocese there is an Archdeacon for the Indian work with a full staff of workers. Athabasca has none.

This situation was not unknown to our predecessors in charge of this work, but through lack of resources it has remained as here stated.

We require a devoted "Travelling Missionary" for the Indians. This would only be the beginning of a really effective work among our native wards. This is a sincere call and a real challenge.



A tea-party of Indians to meet the Bishop on his visit to Fort Simpson last summer. These Indians are attentive to their Christian duties, and when they arrive at this trading post are eager for teaching, and for the services of their Church. Their missionary, Rev. Franklin Clarke, is retiring after long and faithful service.

"The great qualities of character possessed by the Indian race—loyalty to friend and family, hospitality, love of children, courage, dignity, and serenity of their leaders—give to us the stern fact that our responsibility to build on this foundation is a serious one. It is the duty of the Church to show the Indian how to liberate for the Church and the State the finer assets of his racial heritage."

--"Stewards of a Goodly Heritage."

Additional Problems

In the midst of this strenuous but normal life of Indian and White Settler work in a Missionary Diocese, there have recently arisen several unforeseen and staggering problems, and in face of their glowing opportunity, we whom you have sent as Overseers of your great building programme of the Church of England in Canada, can only turn to you for your immediate help and comradeship in our inability to meet them..

They are as follows:—

1. *Newcomers* — Thousands of settlers from the dried-out areas of the South arriving and scattering widely in pioneer territory where there are no places of worship nor any missionary workers; their plucky efforts for re-establishing themselves and their families and their needs of every kind—making a silent



"Covered wagons" bringing settlers from the South. These settlers have no money and no possessions. They have stayed on their parched and burned out farms hoping each year for better days, and now with a cheerful courage and a new hope, they are willing to start anew in the Peace River country. Over 500 carloads of settlers' effects came over the railroad during 1934.

appeal to all men of good-will, and most of all to their Church for whose ministration they long in their hour of disappointment and loss. They are doing their best in contributing their little towards the cost of these ministrations, but for a time the chief part must come from outside the Diocese.



"The long, long trail" from the South ends with the arrival at their new home.

A fine family who came in about two years ago to our thick bush country with 20 other families. An exceptionally wet year here, but these people remained though others did not. There was no school, but this woman got one going two and a half miles from them, but they walk it. Hearing of Sunday School by Post, she has had her children join it and she uses its papers to teach other children of the district



in the Sunday School she has started. She and her eldest boy were confirmed just before Christmas. These people are building up something worth while.

2. *The Challenge of the unprecedented mineral discoveries and commercial developments* in new areas in the Diocese, which have brought to the Valley of the Mackenzie and to Great Bear Lake an activity and a promise hitherto undreamed of. This vast section lying south of the Arctic Circle, known as our "*Deanery of Mackenzie River*", is as large as the Province of Ontario, and is now with its well-known geological indications only at the beginning of what promises to be one of the greatest mineral producing areas of the world. We have, too, the "Gold Strike" at GOLD-FIELDS, near Lake Athabasca. Our Missionary at Chipewyan reports that he crossed the lake to visit this new mining centre to find that 400 men had gone into it last year, 250 remaining all winter and several families already living here; also that at "Yellow Knife" on the shores of the Great Slave Lake where prospectors and miners are already going in.

At FORT NORMAN they have had no Missionary for 14 years. On Sunday, June 30th, I was at Fort Norman. The little Church seats 32 people, but 45 Whites and Indians crowded into it, some stood outside by the door, others went home as there was no room for them.

There was a baptism at 3 p.m. with 14 people present. In the evening there were 42 people in the Church and a large number gathered around the door. On Monday morning, at a service of the Holy Communion, 33 were present and 19 communicated. Yet these people have had no Missionary for 14 years.

A few miles down the river there are the Fort Norman Oil Wells where 20 men are employed. Up the Bear River there are the Great Bear Lake Mines with 300 men in the winter and 500 men in the summer—there are also Fort Wrigley and Fort Good Hope, more unmanned posts in this area, all of which a Missionary at Fort Norman could handle at the present time—if one were there.



The prospector and many who follow him are increasingly to be found in widely scattered areas in the mineral belt which crosses Athabasca.

3. *Fort McMurray and Waterways.*

For a few years we have been sending into this area a student for the summer only, but in both of these towns, which are five miles apart, are rapid and modern developments, and the time has come when we should place a permanent man at this station. *Here there is the largest aeroplane base, commercially, in Canada.* From it 18 planes are operating, coming and going continually from every direction. Large repair shops for aeroplanes are here, and the pilots are remaining all winter for the most part. No other denomination is doing any work here except the Roman Catholics. There is no Sunday School for the boys and girls, and nothing is being done for them. The time has arrived when we should place a capable and efficient Priest at this point. To show the importance of this strategic centre may I mention that during the

past 12 months, two million dollars worth of furs passed through McMurray, 3,000,000 pounds of pitch-blende concentrate shipped south, and 10,000 gallons of gasoline and fuel oil shipped from the Fort Norman oil wells to Great Bear Lake and other points in the North. Besides this, thousands of passengers were carried North by aeroplane, 30,000 pounds of air-mail and 600,000 pounds of express. The aeroplanes flew 830,000 miles.

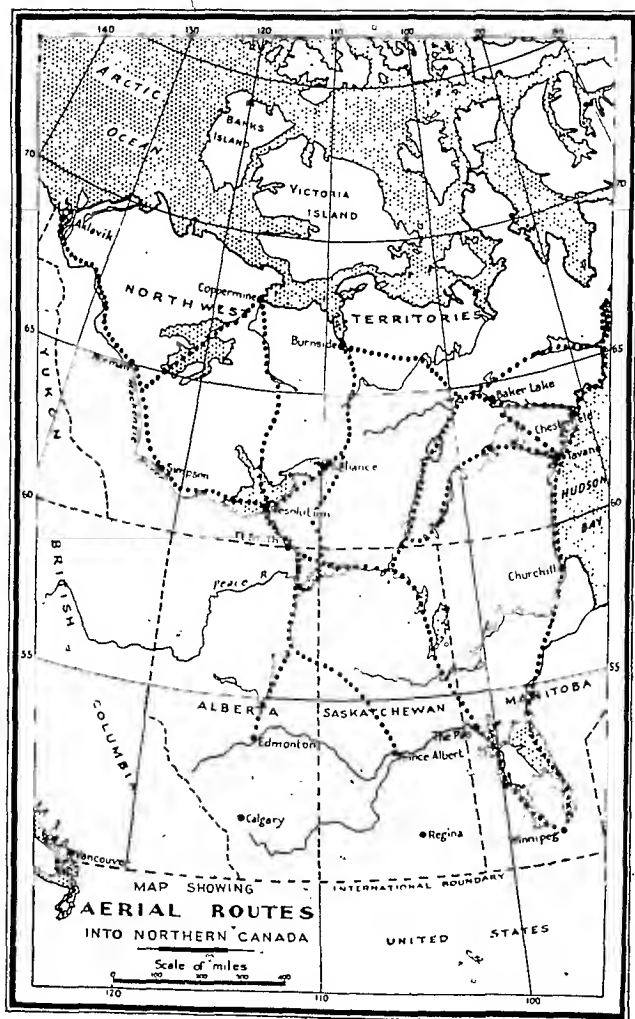
Thousands of acres of tar sands have been discovered near Fort McMurray and are now being developed. The by-products of these sands are without number.

The salt mines are being opened this year, and sixty men will be employed this summer; these are close to McMurray.

We have a church and a "rectorette", a little one-roomed shack, at this post. Recently a member of the Anglican Church died at McMurray and the rector of Colinton had to travel 440 miles to take charge of the funeral.

I know that our fellow-members of the Canadian Church will say—"Surely we should have a permanent Missionary at this important post!"

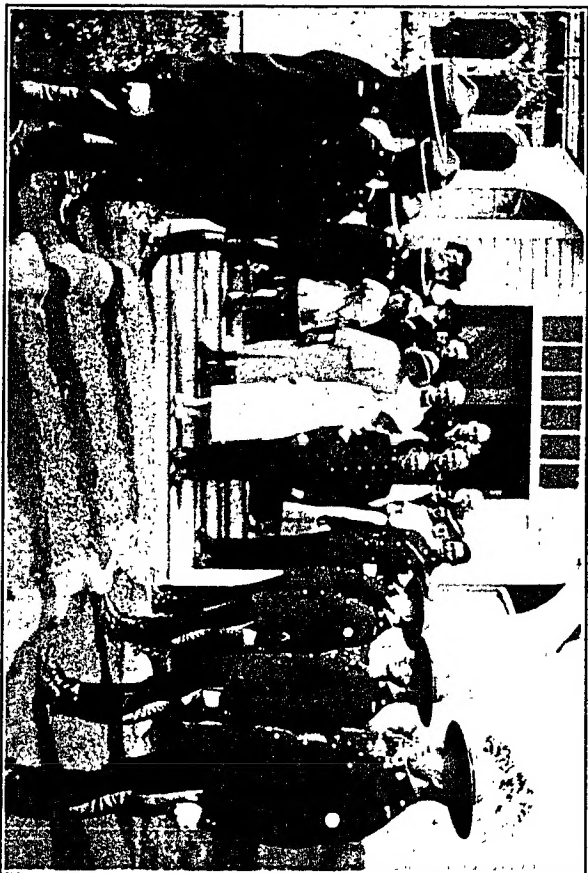
*To give spiritual care to the 80,000 souls in 600,000 square miles of territory, the Diocese has **nineteen active clergy**, and twelve nurses, teachers and supervisors in the three Indian schools; three students, one Church Army man, four van workers and two women in the "Sunday School by Post" House, who send out Sunday School papers monthly to over 6,000 *children who have no Church and no Sunday School*. The Diocese has forty-one churches and ninety-four stations where services are held. Some clergy have as many as twenty centres. Even so, the visible results of their devoted service are most encouraging.*



Courtesy of Department of the Interior, Ottawa.

"Aerial transportation and aerial prospecting are recent developments of great economic importance in the North West territories. The great distances involved and the shortness of the season for travel makes it practically impossible to examine these areas in any other way."

"In carrying personnel and mail the difference is sometimes as hours are to months, and commonly as hours to weeks."



Wedding of a "Mounty" and his charming bride at the beautiful little Church at Fort Simpson. The Bishop and Rev. Franklin Clarke officiating.

Government officials and agents, and those of the great trading, commercial and mining companies and other enterprises, connected with the developments going on in this country, and the families of many of these, are all a constituent part of the Pastorate of the Church in this Diocese.

The tragedy of the present moment. In the autumn of 1934 we were faced with the necessity, through lack of funds, of closing four parishes, locking up twelve churches, and dismissing four clergymen.

Since then additional help has been given by the M. S. C. C. and Societies in England; but we are still \$2,000 short in the yearly grant for stipends.

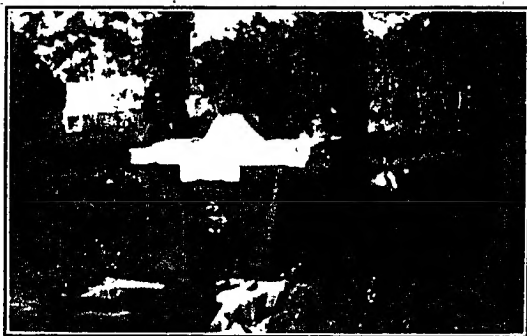
Even when this is received, no allowance is made for additional clergy to cover the field.

Every effort is being made to increase the amount of self-support, but at present the Diocese is still dependent largely upon outside support for maintenance. Help is received from individuals who are interested and to some extent from Old Country Societies, but the chief support comes from the M. S. C. C. To date the amount hoped for has not come in, and at the last General Synod in 1934, the grant was reduced owing to shortage of the apportionment funds.

These are the problems of the Church of England in Canada in the Diocese of Athabasca. We ask that their relation to the grants of the M. S. C. C. may be carefully considered by members of our Church in their contributions to these funds which mean so much to their missionaries in the Canadian fields.

Aid now given to Athabasca in her hour of need will be repaid a thousandfold in the growth of a strong, virile Church, which in turn will help other dioceses in their hour of special need.

The Diocese of Athabasca asks for your thoughts and prayers as it faces this period of unprecedented growth and opportunity, praying that the Lord Jesus Christ may be proclaimed throughout all its wider borders as a Saviour and a Friend, and that many may be won for Christ and His Church.



Celebration of the Holy Communion in the woods, at a
 "S. School by Post" camp—far from a church.



Who will help us to open the
 closed door of the Church at
 Fort Norman?

Gifts in response to Special Appeals by Dioceses in receipt of Grants, or given direct, to those on deputation work for the M. S. C. C., are reported to the General Treasurer and are credited as contributions on Apportionment to the parish and diocese in which they originate, and as payments on the current grants of M. S. C. C.



OUR SPECIAL NEEDS

We would humbly ask—

(a) For the Prayers of friends, that God would help us
in this great task in this Pioneer Land.

(b) For the adoption of four Parishes—

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Fort Vermilion | \$500 yearly |
| 2. Mirror Landing | \$500 “ |
| 3. Colinton | \$500 “ |
| 4. Fort Smith and Fort Fitzgerald | \$500 “ |

(c) For Fort Norman and District\$1500 “

(d) Cars for the Clergy to help them to cover
the great distances—

Three cars \$750 each

(e) For the Sunday School by Post, which cares
for 6,000 boys and girls who are without a
Church or Sunday School \$2,000

(f) Six bells for Churches.

Any help of any kind, whether small or large.